

**House Study Bill 610 - Introduced**

HOUSE FILE \_\_\_\_\_  
BY (PROPOSED COMMITTEE ON  
TRANSPORTATION BILL BY  
CHAIRPERSON BEST)

**A BILL FOR**

1 An Act relating to vehicles, including the initial registration  
2 and issuance of certificate of title by any county treasurer  
3 and the definitions of terms for purposes of motor vehicle  
4 franchisers.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. Section 321.20, subsection 4, Code 2024, is  
2 amended to read as follows:

3 4. Notwithstanding [this section](#) or any other provision of  
4 law to the contrary, ~~if the program required by subsection~~  
5 ~~2 is not implemented by July 1, 2019,~~ an owner of a vehicle  
6 subject to registration or a lessor of a vehicle pursuant to  
7 chapter 321F that is subject to registration and has a gross  
8 vehicle weight of less than ten thousand pounds, may apply to  
9 ~~the any county treasurer of a county contiguous to the county~~  
10 ~~designated for the owner under [subsection 1](#) for the initial~~  
11 registration and issuance of a certificate of title. However,  
12 any reference in this chapter to the county where a vehicle  
13 is registered or the county where a certificate of title was  
14 issued shall be deemed to refer to the applicable county  
15 described in subsection 1, regardless of which county treasurer  
16 received application for and issued the initial registration  
17 and certificate of title under this subsection.

18 Sec. 2. Section 321.166, subsection 2, Code 2024, is amended  
19 to read as follows:

20 2. Every registration plate or pair of plates shall  
21 display a registration plate number which shall consist of  
22 alphabetical or numerical characters or a combination thereof  
23 and the name of this state, which may be abbreviated. Every  
24 registration plate issued by the county treasurer shall  
25 display the name of the county, including any plate issued  
26 pursuant to [section 321.34](#), except Pearl Harbor and purple  
27 heart registration plates issued prior to January 1, 1997;  
28 ~~and~~ collegiate, fire fighter, and medal of honor registration  
29 plates; and registration plates issued pursuant to section  
30 321.20, subsection 4. Special truck registration plates shall  
31 display the word "special". The department may adopt rules to  
32 implement [this subsection](#).

33 Sec. 3. Section 322A.1, unnumbered paragraph 1, Code 2024,  
34 is amended to read as follows:

35 ~~When~~ The following words and phrases when used in this

1 chapter shall, unless the context otherwise requires for  
2 the purpose of this chapter, have the meanings respectively  
3 ascribed to them:

4 EXPLANATION

5 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with  
6 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

7 Under current law, a person must generally apply for vehicle  
8 registration and issuance of certificate of title to the county  
9 treasurer where the person resides or where the primary users  
10 of the vehicle are located. However, in 2016, the general  
11 assembly required the department of transportation (DOT) to  
12 develop and implement, by January 1, 2018, a program to allow  
13 for electronic applications, titling, registering, and funds  
14 transfers for vehicles subject to registration (program) in  
15 order to improve the efficiency and timeliness of the processes  
16 and to reduce costs for all parties involved. At the same  
17 time, the general assembly conditionally authorized an owner  
18 of a vehicle subject to registration to apply to the county  
19 treasurer of a county contiguous to the county designated for  
20 the owner if the DOT had not yet implemented the program by  
21 January 1, 2018. In 2018, the general assembly amended the  
22 program implementation date to July 1, 2019.

23 This bill strikes the contiguous county authorization and  
24 instead provides for the initial registration and issuance of  
25 certificate of title by any county treasurer. In addition to  
26 an owner of a vehicle subject to registration, a lessor of a  
27 vehicle pursuant to Code chapter 321F (leasing and renting of  
28 vehicles), if such vehicle is subject to registration and has a  
29 gross vehicle weight of less than 10,000 pounds, is authorized  
30 to apply for initial registration and issuance of certificate  
31 of title to any county treasurer. The bill does not make  
32 corresponding changes. Instead, for all other registration  
33 and certificate of title actions provided or required in Code  
34 chapter 321 (motor vehicles and law of the road), references to  
35 the county where a vehicle is registered or the county where

1 a certificate of title was issued are deemed to refer to the  
2 appropriate county under current law.

3 Current law requires registration plates to display the  
4 name of the county that issues the plates, unless a specific  
5 exception is provided. The bill specifies such an exception  
6 for registration plates issued pursuant to the bill. However,  
7 natural resources special plates issued pursuant to Code  
8 section 321.34(11) must display the name of the county where  
9 the vehicle is registered.

10 The bill removes the context clause applicable to defined  
11 terms in Code chapter 322A (motor vehicle franchisers). In  
12 2022, the Iowa supreme court relied on the context clause  
13 included in Code section 322A.1 to apply an alternate  
14 definition of "community" than how "community" is defined in  
15 Code chapter 322A (Sioux City Truck Sales, Inc. v. Iowa Dept.  
16 of Transportation, 975 N.W.2d 333 (Iowa 2022)). The bill  
17 provides the same introduction to defined words and phrases to  
18 Code chapter 322A as is used for Code chapter 321.